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AUG 5 1987

# Dixon Springs

STATE PARK



# CONSERVATION

## **THE PARK**

Dixon Springs State Park is one of several state parks in the Illinois Shawnee Hills. The park is on a giant block of rock which was dropped 200 feet along a fault line that extends northwesterly across Pope County.

The 496-acre park is about 10 miles west of Golconda on Illinois Route 146 near its junction with Illinois Route 145. The first land acquisition in 1946 was the improvements and further land purchases for Dixon Springs State Park.

## **HISTORY**

The area around the park was occupied by various tribes of Algonquians who, after the Shawnee had been driven from Tennessee, had settled near the mouth of the Wabash River. Dixon Springs was one of their favorite camping grounds and was called "Kitchemus-ke-nee-be" or the Great Medicine Waters.

One of the better known Indian trails, which the early French called the "Grand Trace," passed to the west of the park and south to Fort Massac, then branching out into lesser trails. Much of the "Grand Trace" is Illinois Route 145, one of the most scenic highways in the state, running nearly all of its length south from Harrisburg through the Shawnee National Forest.

This section of the state was part of an Indian reservation occupied for a time by about 6,000 Indians. Like the buffalo, most of the Indians were gone by the early 1830s.

## **NAMED FOR PIONEER**

Dixon Springs takes its name from William Dixon, one of the first white men to build a home in this section, who obtained a school land warrant in 1848 from Governor Augustus C. French. His cabin was a landmark for many years as was an old log church on the adjoining knoll.

A small community grew up at Dixon Springs with a general store, post office, blacksmith shop, grist mill, and several churches.

Dixon Springs became a nineteenth century health spa which attracted hundreds to the seven springs of mineral-enriched water. A bathhouse provided mineral or soft water baths, hot or cold, available at any time. The natural beauty of the area and its interesting stone formations, which helped to give the park valley a more equable temperature in the summer than most of southern Illinois. This made the resort so popular that people came by steamboat excursions from as far away as Paducah, KY, Evansville, IN, and Cairo to Golconda. They then traveled by train to within a couple miles of the park.

## **NATURAL SCENE**

The entire county is hilly and during rainy weather rivulets cascade down the hills in the park forming waterfalls of varying size and height.





Bold cliffs and crags overhang a bubbling brook while large boulders overgrown with ferns, ivy, lichens, and moss fringe the hillside. Giant century-old trees interlock above the small creek as cliffs rise on either side and huge boulders are scattered through the valley.

Equally intriguing are the names given numerous points of interest, including Album Rock, Red Man's Retreat, Wolf Pen, Lover's Leap, Ghost Dance, Pluto's Cave, Alligator Rock, The Chain of Rocks, Devil's Workshop, and Honey Comb Rock. The principal canyon has walls nearly 60 feet high with a long, narrow passageway.

Deer, squirrel, rabbit, groundhog, and fox scamper around the oak, cypress, gum, pine, sycamore, walnut, persimmon, hickory, birch, and maple trees. Dogwood and catalpa trees blossom profusely in season. In the spring the Jack-in-the-pulpit, violet, lady's slipper, May apple, and sweet William brighten the natural beauty.

An open forest a short distance north of the park was used by General John A. Logan as a meeting place when he organized a company of soldiers to serve in the Union army. All the natural beauty abounding here possibly influenced the decision to hold the first 4-H Club camp in the United States at Dixon Springs.

## FACILITIES

**Picnicking** — Picnic tables and outdoor stoves are available at three shaded picnic areas. A picnic shelter, playgrounds, parking areas, and drinking water are also available.

**Swimming Pool** — A modern swimming pool, bathhouse, and 45 foot water slide provides for swimmers enjoyment. Lifeguard is on duty at all times. Towering oaks, elms, birch trees shade the pool.

**Concession Stand** — Located near the swimming pool, the stand provides a variety of refreshments.

**Trails** — There is a self-guided, 1.7 mile nature trail.

**Camping** — There is a Class B trailer camping area with a sanitary dumping station and electricity available. A tent camping area is also provided for the primitive camper. Campers need to obtain a permit from the park personnel. Cabins are available to organized groups for group camping, along with a group camping area.



## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Groups of 25 or more persons will not be admitted to any state site unless permission from the site superintendent has been obtained to use the facilities. In addition, groups of minors must have adequate supervision and at least one responsible adult must accompany each group of 15 minors. All pets must be on a leash.

Numerous state sites are within easy access of every part of Illinois. Lodges, cabins, and dining rooms are important features of Illinois Beach, Starved Rock, Pere Marquette, and Giant City; White Pines Forest and Cave-In-Rock have cabins and dining rooms only, and Black Hawk has dining rooms only. Reservations for lodging should be made with lodge managers.

Most state sites are open year-round, except on Christmas Day and New Year's Day. When weather conditions necessitate the closing of roads during freezing and thawing periods, access to facilities is by foot only.

For more details about this site, contact Site Superintendent, Dixon Springs State Park, R.R. #2, Golconda, IL 62938, phone (618) 949-3394. For information on other Illinois sites, write the Department of Conservation, 524 S. Second St., Springfield, IL 62706.

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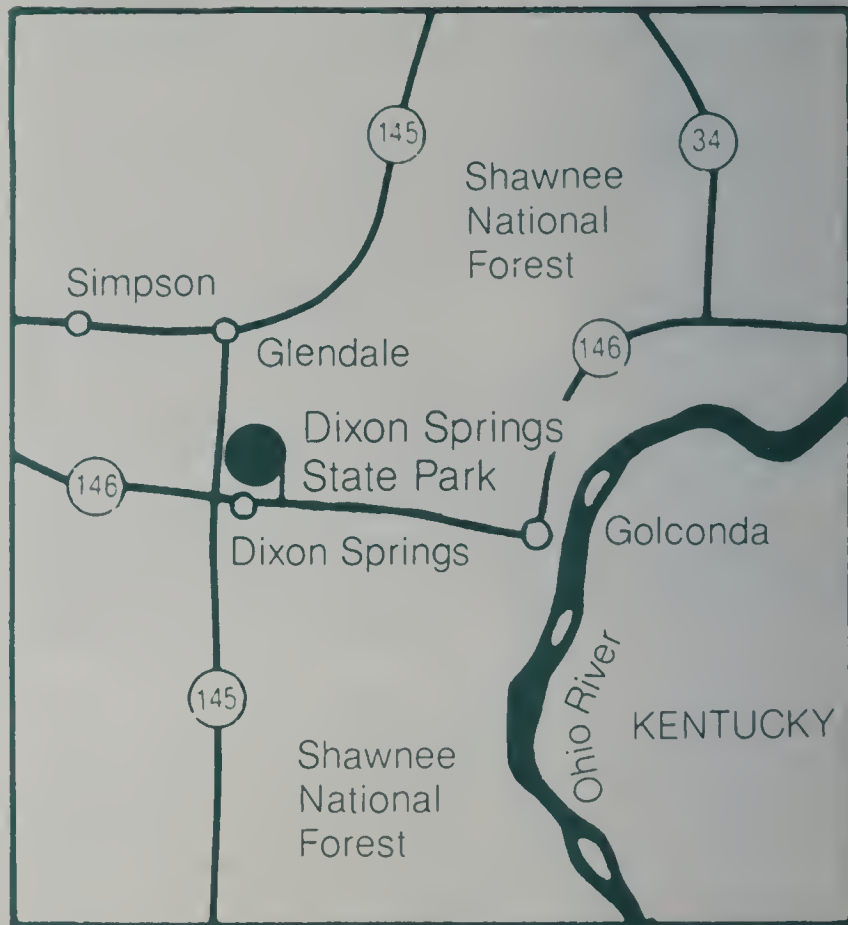


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Park Map